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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

News Releases-

Release No. 0044.94
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RURAL AREAS TO BENEFIT FROM PRESIDENT'S COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

(Espy will designate three rural Empowerment Zones and 30 rural Enterprise Communities)

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17 -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy today joined President Clinton at the White House to launch the application process for the administration's Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC) revitalization program.

"President Clinton is committed to making our communities vibrant with job opportunities for all," said Espy. "We know that America works when Americans work. The Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities will bring together all segments in an area--from government officials, to business leaders, to church leaders and to nonprofit organizers. All will have the common goal of revitalizing their communities and creating jobs.

"Because this program is built around strategic planning development by rural communities, it will help them achieve their own vision for the kind of community they want to have in the 21st Century."

Three Empowerment Zones and 30 Enterprise Communities will be designated specifically for rural areas after a competitive application process. The rural designations will be made by Espy. The six Empowerment Zones and 65 Enterprise Community designations for urban areas will be made by Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry G. Cisneros.

All designations will be made in consultation with the President's Community Enterprise Board, comprised of Cabinet members and advisors to the President on domestic issues. The board is chaired by Vice President Gore.

Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities will receive special consideration for various federal programs and other assistance, including social service block grants, new tax exempt Facility Bonds, tax breaks for employment, and other special consideration for existing federal programs.

The difference in the benefits for Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities is that Empowerment Zones will qualify for tax credits for each worker who resides in the zones; Section 179 expensing is increased; and grants are substantially larger.

One special feature in the EZ/EC program will benefit the areas that apply but are not designated. Communities that apply but are not chosen will qualify for assistance in seeking regulation waivers for federal programs and if there is a Community Development Corporation within the jurisdiction, that corporation can qualify to receive tax preferred contributions from donors. Eight CDC's in rural areas will be selected under this separate program.

To apply for a designation under the EZ/EC program, comprehensive strategic plans must be submitted. The plans must emphasize four principles: 1. Economic opportunity, including job creation; 2. Community development, including comprehensive approaches to access to affordable housing, human services, economic development, public safety and a clean environment; 3. Community partnership, involving participation of all segments of the community; and 4. Strategic vision for change, identifying clear goals for the community.

Poverty, unemployment and other need factors will be critical in determining eligibility but play a less significant role than the four key principles.

"This is not government as usual," said Under Secretary of Agriculture Bob Nash, who helped to create and who will oversee the program at USDA. "The development program provides a means for rural towns and regions to work together to develop their own plans to overcome poverty, unemployment and other social problems.

"President Clinton's EZ/EC program is one more way in which we are reinventing the federal government to be more responsive to community concerns."

Applications for the EZ/EC program will require communities to submit very few forms. Instead, the key will be a comprehensive development plan that involves community residents, local and state governments, nonprofit and private sector groups and organizations, regional planning agencies, and other private and public entities.

In the spirit of Vice President Gore's goal to make government and information more accessible to Americans all across the nation, USDA will use the Internet Mail System to receive questions and inquiries for more information on the EZ/EC program. Rural and urban communities may receive information or applications from Internet by sending a message to info@ezec.usda.gov.

People interested in receiving a copy of an application or getting more details about the program should contact a state office of the Farmers Home Administration or call 202-690-1045. The deadline to apply will be 4 p.m. EDT, Thursday, June 30. Applications may be mailed or hand-delivered. Rural applications should be mailed to: USDA, Rural Development Administration, EZ/EC Team, Room 5405, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-3200.

Interested individuals or groups are encouraged to attend one of the workshops on the application process being held around the country. The rural workshops will be held in Charleston, W.Va., Feb. 8; Lumberton, N.C., Feb. 9; McAllen, Texas, Feb. 11; Greenville, Miss., Feb. 14; Las Vegas, N.M., Feb. 17; Atlanta, Ga., Feb. 23; and Kansas City, Mo., Feb. 28. For information about the workshops, call 1-800-645-4712 (fax 806-894-0340).



Release No. 0045.94
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USDA CONSIDERS REVISING LIST OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES ALLOWED FOR IMPORTATION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is considering revisions to the list of fruits and vegetables allowed for importation along with conditions for their entry.

"We want to give importers and other interested people a chance to add to the list of allowed fruits and vegetables, provided they do not pose a significant risk of introducing exotic pests to American agriculture," said Lonnie J. King, acting administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

USDA will publish both a draft listing of produce by country of origin, and an advance notice of proposed rulemaking, in the Federal Register this spring. That list will consist of produce imported during the past several years that USDA has determined poses a low risk of introducing exotic plant pests and therefore could be safely imported.

Produce importers who want more produce added to the list can write USDA with a request to add to the list, King said. "Scientists at USDA will also study other public comments concerning the listed produce," he said.

"The requests will be reviewed, and USDA will prepare pest risk analyses," King said. "Only produce that poses no significant risk of introducing new pests will be added to the list." After a final rule is published, only produce on the list will be allowed importation.

More information may be obtained on the fruits and vegetables regulations from Peter Grosser or Frank Cooper, Plant Protection and Quarantine, APHIS, USDA, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782, or (301) 436-8295.



Release No. 0048.94
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FORMER SOVIET UNION ELIGIBLE FOR MORE PORK UNDER EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18--U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced an opportunity for sales of an additional 20,000 metric tons of U.S. pork to seven independent states of the former Soviet Union under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Export Enhancement Program.

Sales of pork will be made to buyers in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. The export sales will be facilitated through the payment of bonuses by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

This allocation will be valid until Dec. 31, as provided for in the invitation for offers. Details of the program, including an invitation for offers from exporters, will be issued in the near future.

For more information call Richard J. Chavez, (202) 720-5540, or Larry McElvain, (202) 720-6211.

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Release No. 0049.94

Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623

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USDA ANNOUNCES EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PACKAGE FOR TABLE EGGS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18--U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today announced a package of initiatives under the Export Enhancement Program to encourage sales of 55 million dozen table eggs.

With today's announcement, Hong Kong is eligible to purchase an additional 30 million dozen eggs and six countries in the Near East--United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the Republic of Yemen--are eligible to purchase 25 million dozen eggs.

This new package replaces the EEP egg initiatives announced previously. The new initiatives will remain in effect through April 15, 1995.

Sales of table eggs will be made to buyers in these markets through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. The export sales will be facilitated through the payment of bonuses by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. The subsidy will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in these markets.

Details of the program, including an invitation for offers from exporters, will be issued soon. For more information, call Richard J. Chavez, (202) 720-5540, or Larry McElvain, (202) 720-6211.

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Release No. 0052.94

Jim Brownlee (202)720-2091

STAUBER NAMED TO SMALL COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POST AT USDA

WASHINGTON, January 21--Karl N. Stauber has been named as deputy under secretary of agriculture for small community and rural development, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today.

As deputy under secretary, Stauber will help in policy and budget development for USDA's Farmers Home Administration, Rural Development Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, and the Agricultural Cooperative Service.

"Karl Stauber brings to this Department valuable experience in management, rural development, sustainable agriculture and forestry, and small business development," Espy said. "We plan to take full advantage of his background and experience to advance our mission to the people in rural America."

Prior to joining USDA, Stauber served as the vice president of the Northwest Area Foundation, a St. Paul-based private foundation that annually grants approximately \$14 million to increase the economic vitality of low-income communities in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa.

In the mid-1980s, Stauber co-founded and managed an alternative venture capital firm that promoted the development of worker-owned businesses in low-income, rural communities throughout the U.S. Between 1979 and 1984, Stauber was the executive director of the Needmor Fund, a private foundation based in Toledo, Ohio. Previously, he served as the assistant director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in Winston-Salem, N.C., and held several posts in North Carolina state government.

A native of Statesville, N.C., Stauber received a B.A. in American studies from the University of North Carolina, a certificate from the program for management development at the Harvard Business School, and a Ph.D. in public policy at the Union Institute. His dissertation focused on the development of farm policy designed to promote resource conservation and rural development.



Release No. 0054.94
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USDA PROPOSES TO DECLARE GERMANY FREE OF TWO DESTRUCTIVE LIVESTOCK DISEASES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21--The U.S. Department of Agriculture proposed today to declare Germany free of foot-and-mouth disease and rinderpest, two communicable and destructive livestock diseases.

This proposal would allow fresh, chilled and frozen meats and dairy products from ruminant animals to be imported into the United States from Germany under restrictions. However, because there is limited U.S. demand to import these products from Germany, the proposal is not expected to have a major impact on current trade patterns.

"We are proposing to accept the German application for free status based on the documentation German officials have provided and on our on-site evaluation of their animal health programs," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

APHIS will consider declaring a country free of FMD and rinderpest if no cases of the diseases are reported or no animals are vaccinated for the disease for at least one year. Germany has not had a case of rinderpest, a viral disease of cattle and bison, since 1870. Consequently, there has not been a vaccination program in Germany for that disease. Vaccinations for FMD, a highly infectious disease of cattle and other clovenhoofed animals, ended in that country in 1991. The last FMD outbreak there was in 1988.

APHIS's National Center for Import and Export reviewed the application and documentation supplied by the German government. A team of APHIS officials also traveled to Germany to evaluate the capability of the country's veterinary services, laboratory and diagnostic procedures, vaccination practices and enforcement of animal health regulations. This review confirmed that Germany has eradicated FMD. Under APHIS's authority, Germany must have eradicated FMD in order to be declared free of rinderpest.

This proposal was published in the Jan. 20 Federal Register. To comment, send an original and three copies of written comments referring to docket number 93-159-1 on or before March 21 to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments once received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing access to the reading room are encouraged to call (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry.



Release No. 0056.94
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ESPY CITES USDA ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING FIRST YEAR OF CLINTON ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21--A year after taking office, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy said the U.S. Department of Agriculture has become more responsive to the needs of American farmers and consumers under the Clinton Administration, and has effected numerous savings that will cut American taxpayer costs.

"The past year has not been business as usual at USDA," Espy said. "We have made significant progress toward our goals of increased farm income, improved service to farmers, help for rural communities, expansion of trade, and an even safer and more nutritious food supply for all Americans."

Espy said the Administration's first-year accomplishments at USDA include:

Trade -- Under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the United States for the first time ever obtained permanent access to the rice markets of Japan and Korea. This historic opening will help lower other trade barriers while putting more money in the pockets of American farmers.

•Also under GATT, subsidies will be lowered worldwide, creating a more level playing field that American agricultural producers have sought for years. As the most efficient producers in the world, they will be able to take advantage of trade barrier reduction to expand sales and benefit rural America.

•Passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is expected to result in an increase of \$2.6 billion in U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico and generate 56,000 new jobs for U.S. citizens by the year 2008.

•In addition, after a long series of negotiations, China agreed in 1993 to import U.S. apples for the first time.

Budget/Reorganization -- Espy has begun to cut the waste from USDA with an eye toward reinventing the current system to better serve the needs of farmers and ranchers, consumers, rural residents and the American taxpayer.

•Espy has proposed to Congress a plan to streamline USDA that will reduce the number of agencies from 43 to 30, reduce the staff by 7,500 positions, and close or consolidate about 1,200 field offices. The proposed actions will result in projected savings to the American taxpayer of over \$2 billion. (House and Senate hearings have been held and a House markup is scheduled for Feb. 8.)

•Administrative reorganization efforts at USDA resulted in millions of dollars in savings including \$146 million through staff reductions.

•Some other first-year savings were: \$6.7 million through reform of the employee bonus and award system; \$90 million through reforming the loan program of the Rural Electrification Administration; \$389,000 by streamlining the telephone and computer networks; and \$500,000 by eliminating the Yearbook of Agriculture.

•In addition, the Administration will save \$726 million over the next five years by phasing out the wool and mohair price support system and the honey support program.

Food/Consumer Safety -- After the tragic E. coli outbreak in the Pacific Northwest in the dawning hours of the Administration, Espy quickly concluded that meat and poultry could no longer be inspected in 1993 as it was in 1933.

•Espy moved quickly to implement major policy changes, including tough enforcement of meat and poultry inspection regulations, initiation of unannounced plant reviews, stricter product handling requirements, better consumer information and the beginning of a science-based inspection system.

Food Stamp Reform/Nutrition Improvements -- Several steps were taken to reduce fraud and errors in the food stamp program, which will benefit both program participants and the American taxpayer. For example, during FY 1993, intentional program violations collections increased by more than 9 percent from the year before. Additional actions included:

•The Administration's food stamp reform bill, which became law as the Mickey Leland Hunger Relief Act, included several provisions that increase the penalties for people and stores that traffic in exchanging food stamps for cash.

•More than \$8 million was collected in 1993 through a tax recovery system which allows the government to deduct over-issued food stamp benefits from tax refunds of people no longer on the program. The Administration is moving forward with plans to promote a national system of electronic benefits transfer (EBT), which replaces food stamps with an ATM-like plastic card. Six states now have EBT systems--Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Minnesota, Ohio and Iowa. (Only Maryland's system is statewide.) Thirty other states are moving toward the EBT program, which will cut down on paperwork, costs and fraud.

•The Administration has doubled the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables in the school lunch program and has moved toward developing a program to reduce fat.

Environment/Natural Resources -- The Clinton Administration has made coordination and cooperation among agencies a key component of environmental policy, and USDA has taken a leadership role in natural resources protection and environmental concerns as they relate to American agriculture.

●As part of the Administration's wetlands policy, USDA's Soil Conservation Service was named the lead federal agency for delineating wetlands on agricultural lands. This action will provide more certainty for farmers and provide more effective coordination among federal agencies with wetlands protection responsibilities.

●The Administration is committed to reducing the use of pesticides and to promoting sustainable agriculture. Under USDA's leadership, the administration has intensified efforts to reduce the use of higher-risk pesticides and to promote integrated pest management, including biological and cultural control systems and other sustainable agricultural practices.

Rural Development -- Revitalization of Rural America has been a USDA key priority in the past year. Under the Administration's recently announced Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities program, Espy will designate three empowerment zones and 30 enterprise communities in rural areas. This program will bring together all segments in an area to revitalize communities and create jobs.

Flood Disaster Response -- When disastrous floods struck the Midwest this year, the Administration's response was quick and on target. The federal government worked hand-in-hand with state and local agencies to bring disaster relief in record time to farmers, other residents and local communities in the stricken area. We put major farm program changes in place to help farmers impacted by the floods and excessive rainfall stay in the business of farming.



Program Announcements-

Release No. 0047.94
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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 18--Under Secretary of Agriculture Eugene Moos today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

--long grain whole kernels:	11.88 cents per pound
--medium grain whole kernels:	11.17 cents per pound
--short grain whole kernels:	11.09 cents per pound
--broken kernels:	5.94 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are zero.

These announced prices are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Jan. 25 at 3 p.m. EST.



USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21--Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 27. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Jan. 21 through midnight Thursday, Jan. 27.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 106 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 3.70 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I.	Calculated AWP	55.33 cents per pound
	1993 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
	AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	106
II.	USNE Price	72.75 cents per pound
	NE Price	- 69.05 cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	3.70 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	69.05
Adjustments:	
Avg. U.S. spot market location	11.91
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.50
Avg. U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.72
Calculated AWP	55.33
Further AWP adjustment	- 0
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	55.33 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	69.05
NE Coarse Count Price	- 65.72
	3.33
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.20
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0.13 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is above 52.35 cents per pound, the base quality loan rate for both the 1992 and 1993 marketing years, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the loan rate, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is above the 1993-crop loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available during this period.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 2.45 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30, 1994. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Price	NE Price cents/lb	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate
	
1	Dec. 30, 1993	65.50	62.00	2.25
2	Jan. 6, 1993	66.75	63.75	1.75
3	Jan. 13, 1994	69.00	66.10	1.65
4	Jan. 20, 1994	72.75	69.05	2.45

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, Jan. 27, at 5 p.m.

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